

Donato emails spark debate

Asked to stop 'vendetta' or resign, Selectman sticks to his guns

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The discord stirred up over the weekend by Selectman Chris Donato's allegations against Town Manager Richard MacDonald spilled over into the selectmen's meeting Monday, as Donato defended his position while residents urged him to act civilly and stop his "personal vendetta" against the town manager or resign.



Rec. Director Gordon Cushing read a letter of support for MacDonald signed by 20 town department heads.

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ald's "management practices are looked favorably upon by many people who work directly for him."

Also, Cushing said that no department head listed on the letter was ever asked for input on MacDonald's job performance.

Donato asked Cushing if the employees who had signed the letter had done so during work. Cushing said no, they were asked to sign it before or after work and during

their lunch break.

Donato disagreed, saying he had been told that employees had been asked during work hours. He then asked MacDonald to "please look into that," which brought groans from the audience.

"It sounds to me that it was coercing employees," said Donato. "If they're not on that list, they're

on the hit list."

Donato then denied allegations from one resident that a police cruiser was used to shuttle his children from school to the police station and also explained that no evidence was ever found against his wife regarding allegations of improper overtime.

"There's no truth to it," said Donato. "It's an attempt to attack me and my family so I'd have to recuse myself [from matters relating to the police chief.]"

Donato also said he had offered to serve as a mediator to work out any problem between MacDonald and DeLuca.

"I reached out to Richard ... I said I know I'm only getting one side of the story. He

response was, 'I don't have to answer those questions.' Then what am I to do?"

Jerry Steinke of Washington Street told Donato that he fully supports the town manager act and the town manager's ability not to renew the police chief's contract nor discuss his reasons.

"We implore Selectman Donato to act in a civil and respectful manner when conducting town business in keeping with the history of the town of Duxbury," said Steinke.

Humphreys Lane resident Bill Campbell agreed: "As a resident of this town, I resent being asked to participate in something that has all the earmarks of a personal vendetta."

Donato defended himself to the crowd, saying he has

done everything above board.

"I believe that when all the facts are out, you'll have a different opinion," he said. "But I ask you to consider one thing: why did the town offer a buyout if he had the right under the town manager's act not to renew the contract? I have no guilt. Let me put it this way: who is in danger of being sued? Is it me? I've done

"The problem is you, Mr. Donato. I think it's in the best interest of the town that you stop what you're doing. You either have a vendetta against Mr. MacDonald or you have mistaken your role as being an attorney for the police chief."

— Thomas Tucker, Winsor Street

everything I believe is in the right manner."

In a prepared statement MacDonald broke his silence on the issue but remained steadfast in not discussing his reasons for not renewing DeLuca's contract.

"I have done this to protect the community from the mud-slinging that can occur

MacDonald supporters speak out at meeting

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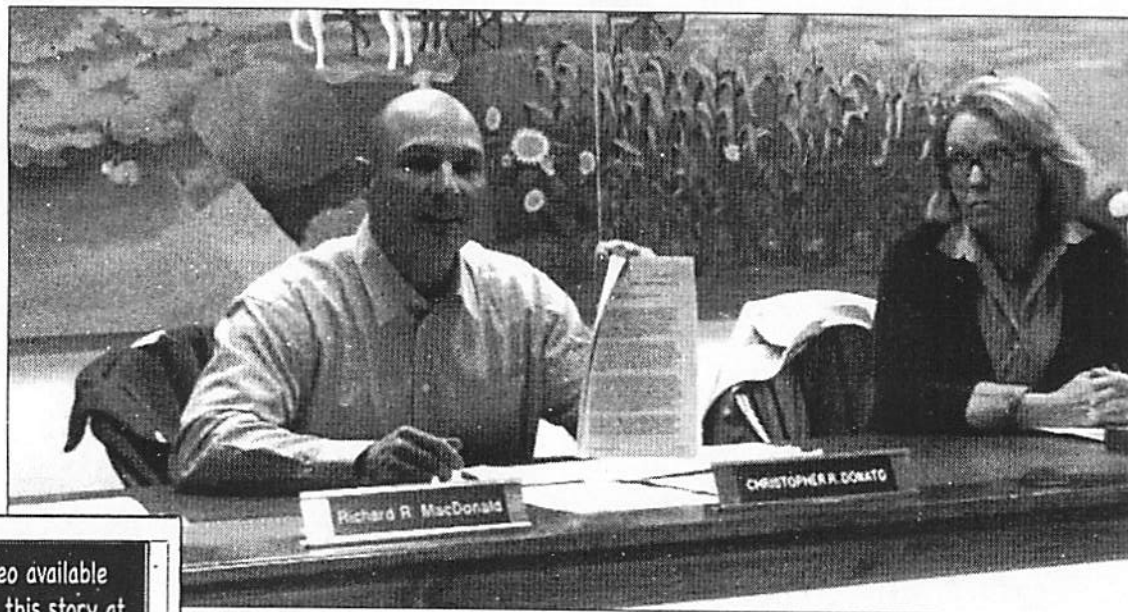
On Sunday, Donato sent a series of e-mails to MacDonald, the selectmen and the media outlining his allegations. (To read the full e-mails, see page 23.)

Selectmen Chairman Betsy Sullivan stressed that the communications were not from the Board of Selectmen but only from Donato. Selectman Jon Witten was not at Monday's meeting because he had to attend a town meeting held in one of the communities in which he is a town counsel.

Recreation Director Gordon Cushing read a letter of support for MacDonald signed by 20 town department heads including the fire chief, harbor master, town planner, department of public works director, council on aging director, animal control officer, finance director and veterans agent.

In the letter, Cushing called the recent attacks on MacDonald's management style "baseless" and described him as an "outstanding" town manager.

"As employees that work directly for Mr. MacDonald, we consider the town manager to be a valuable asset for the town of Duxbury," said Cushing. "Mr. MacDonald is a hard working, dedicated and com-



Selectman Chris Donato holds up a copy of an e-mail he distributed to the public with allegations against Town Manager Richard MacDonald. He was roundly criticized by many in the audience at Monday night's meeting, but told residents "I believe that when all the facts are out, you'll have a different opinion."

petent town manager, who has always placed the best interest of the town of Duxbury first and foremost."

Cushing said that MacDonald-

"There's no truth to [the allegations]. It's an attempt to attack me and my family so I'd have to recuse myself [from matters relating to the police chief.]"

— Selectman Chris Donato

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